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## Maritime heritage trail links Valletta, Floriana and Marsa

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One of the information panels in the new mercantile heritage trail. Photo: Matthew Mirabelli.

A heritage trail connected to seafaring was launched by Heritage Malta yesterday, with information panels along the way about important buildings related to the sector. The mercantile trail spans from Il-Barriera in Valletta, through Floriana and ending at the Menqa in Marsa.

It forms part of a €1.5 million Mercator project, mostly funded by the EU, that has brought together Mediterranean countries sharing a similar culture.

Standing in front of Victoria Gate leading to Grand Harbour in Valletta, Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism Mario de Marco said the countries forming part of the project - Malta, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Lebanon and Morocco - are united by the Mediterranean.

Heritage Malta chairman Mario Tabone said the seafaring routes of the Mediterranean have not only been an avenue for the transport of cargo but have also helped in the spread of culture.

"For many centuries the Mediterranean divided many countries, but it is actually a sea that unites."

He underlined the importance of cultural tourism adding that, while it was good for tourism to grow, this should happen with a respect for heritage.

"This trail should not only offer a distinct experience to tourists, but also give something back to the Maltese," he said.

The trail doubles as an interactive way of teaching history to the younger generations, Education and Culture Minister Dolores Cristina pointed out.

When she used to teach history, she said, she only had one book to use in class, while nowadays there are a multitude of interactive ways to pass on information to students.

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